

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following is a complete listing of the claims, and replaces all earlier versions and listings.

1. (Currently Amended) An image input apparatus comprising:
a photoelectric conversion unit adapted to acquire image information of an object from a plurality of divided areas and to output signals from each of a plurality of output units corresponding to respective ones of the areas, wherein each of the areas includes a[n] plurality of effective pixels ~~portion~~ and a plurality of non-image pixels ~~portion~~; and

a correcting unit adapted to correct offset components contained in the signals output from each of the output units during a period of acquiring the image information, in accordance with a first signal output from the plurality of effective pixels ~~portion~~ during a period other than the image information acquiring, a second signal output from the plurality of non-image pixels ~~portion~~ during the period other than the image information acquiring, and a third signal output from the plurality of non-image pixels ~~portion~~ during the period of acquiring image information.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Previously Presented) An image input apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the signals from the plurality of areas are output separately to right and left directions respectively.

4. (Previously Presented) An image input apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the offset components include a level difference of the signals between the areas output from the plurality of divided areas.

5. (Previously Presented) An image input apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said correcting unit includes:

a subtracting unit adapted to subtract the offset components from the signals output from the plurality of areas of said photoelectric conversion unit during the period of acquiring the image information;

a calculating unit adapted to calculate the fluctuation of the offset components in accordance with the second and third signals; and

an adjusting unit adapted to adjust the offset components to be subtracted by said subtracting unit, in accordance with an output signal from said calculating unit.

6. (Previously Presented) An image input apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the first, second, and third signals are obtained through addition of signals of the areas and averaging thereof.

7 and 8. (Canceled)

9. (Previously Presented) An image input apparatus according to claim 5, wherein adjusting of the offset components by said adjusting unit is executed during a period other than the image information acquiring.

10. - 29. (Canceled)

30. (Currently Amended) An image processing method of processing signals output from a photoelectric conversion unit adapted to acquire image information of an object from a plurality of divided areas and to output the signals from each of a plurality of output units corresponding to respective ones of the areas, wherein each of the areas includes a[n] plurality of effective pixels portion and a plurality of non-image pixels portion, said method comprising:

correcting offset components contained in the signals output from each of the output units during a period of acquiring the image information, in accordance with a first signal output from the plurality of effective pixels portion during a period other than the image information acquiring, a second signal output from the plurality of non-image pixels portion during the period other than the image information acquiring, and a third signal output from the plurality of non-image pixels portion during the period of acquiring image information.

31. and 32. (Canceled)

33. (Currently Amended) A storage medium storing a program for processing signals output from a photoelectric conversion unit adapted to acquire image information of an object from a plurality of divided areas and to output the signals from each of a plurality of output units corresponding to respective ones of the areas, wherein

each of the areas includes a[n] plurality of effective pixels ~~portion~~ and a plurality of non-image pixels ~~portion~~, said program comprising:

a code of correcting offset components contained in the signals output from each of the output units during a period of acquiring the image information, in accordance with a first signal output from the plurality of effective pixels ~~portion~~ during a period other than the image information acquiring, a second signal output from the plurality of non-image pixels ~~portion~~ during the period other than the image information acquiring, and a third signal output from the plurality of non-image pixels ~~portion~~ during the period of acquiring image information.

34.-36. (Canceled)

37. (Currently Amended) An image input apparatus comprising:

a photoelectric conversion unit adapted to acquire image information of an object from a plurality of divided areas and to output signals from each of a plurality of output units corresponding to respective ones of the areas, wherein each of the areas includes a[n] plurality of effective pixels ~~portion~~ and a plurality of non-image pixels ~~portion~~; and

a correcting unit adapted to correct offset components contained in the signals output from each of the output units during a period of acquiring image information, in accordance with a first signal output from the plurality of effective pixels ~~portion~~ during a period other than the image information acquiring, a second signal output

from the plurality of non-image pixels ~~portion~~ during the period of acquiring the image information, and an average of the second signal.

38. (Previously Presented) An image input apparatus according to claim 37, wherein the signals from the plurality of areas are output separately to right and left directions respectively.

39. (Previously Presented) An image input apparatus according to claim 37, wherein the offset components include a level difference of the signals between the areas output from the plurality of divided areas.

40. (Previously Presented) An image input apparatus according to claim 37, wherein said correcting unit includes:

a subtracting unit adapted to subtract the offset components from the signals output from the plurality of areas of said photoelectric conversion unit during the period of acquiring the image information;

a calculating unit adapted to calculate the fluctuation of the offset components in accordance with the second and third signals; and

an adjusting unit adapted to adjust the offset components to be subtracted by said subtracting unit, in accordance with an output signal from said calculating unit.

41. (Previously Presented) An image input apparatus according to claim 37, wherein the first, second, and third signals are obtained through addition of signals of the areas and averaging thereof.

42. (Previously Presented) An image input apparatus according to claim 40, wherein adjusting of the offset components by said adjusting unit is executed during a period other than the image information acquiring.

43. (Currently Amended) An image processing method of processing signals output from a photoelectric conversion unit adapted to acquire image information of an object from a plurality of divided areas and to output the signals from each of a plurality of output units corresponding to respective ones of the areas, wherein each of the areas includes a[n] plurality of effective pixels ~~portion~~ and a plurality of non-image pixels ~~portion~~, said method comprising:

correcting offset components contained in the signals output from each of the output units during a period of acquiring image information, in accordance with a first signal output from the plurality of effective pixels ~~portion~~ during a period other than the image information acquiring, a second signal output from the plurality of non-image pixels ~~portion~~ during the period of acquiring the image information, and an average of the second signal.

44. (Currently Amended) A storage medium storing a program for processing signals output from a photoelectric conversion unit adapted to acquire image

information of an object from a plurality of divided areas and to output the signals from each of a plurality of output units corresponding to respective ones of the areas, wherein each of the areas includes a[n] plurality of effective pixels ~~portion~~ and a plurality of non-image pixels ~~portion~~, said program comprising:

a code of correcting offset components contained in the signals output from each of the output units during a period of acquiring image information, in accordance with a first signal output from the plurality of effective pixels ~~portion~~ during a period other than the image information acquiring, a second signal output from the plurality of non-image pixels ~~portion~~ during the period of acquiring the image information, and an average of the second signal.